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SUNKEN FERRY "ESTONIA" TO BE PROTECTED. The Finnish Foreign Ministry on 17 February said that Estonia, Finland, and Sweden are to ban access to the ferry "Estonia," which sank off the Finnish coast on 28 September at a cost of more than 900 lives, Reuters reported. The three countries will sign an agreement stating that attempts to raise victims or objects from the ferry will be punished. The statement says: "The spot is regarded as being the grave of the victims which the governments wish to be respected as their place of burial." -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.

LITHUANIAN PRESIDENT IN POLAND. Algirdas Brazauskas told the Sejm on 17 February that distrust between Lithuania and Poland was fading into the past, BNS reported. He said the "misunderstanding" over the Polish- Lithuanian border "must be eliminated as soon as possible." He went on to propose the creation of a common peacekeeping battalion and joint control of air space and sea borders. President Lech Walesa and Brazauskas signed a declaration on cooperation to improve bilateral relations. He also discussed with Senate President Adam Struzik and Sejm speaker and prime minister candidate Josef Oleksy issues relating to ethnic minorities in both countries. Brazauskas returned to Vilnius on 18 February. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.

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CONGRESS OF LATVIA'S FARMERS' UNION. The congress in Jurmala on 17 February, attended by Latvian President Guntis Ulmanis and ambassador to Moscow Janis Peters, adopted a new party program describing the Farmers' Union as a center party whose main goal is "ensuring the welfare of Latvia's residents in a free and independent country," Labrit reported on 18 February. Former Agriculture Minister Janis Kinna said that talks will begin with Latvia's Christian Democratic Union and the Latgale Democratic Party on the formation of a pre-election coalition. The congress reelected Andris Rozentals as board chairman, with Ansis Grundulis as Central Revision Commission chairman, and Antonijs Zunda as secretary. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.

DISCIPLINE IN LITHUANIAN ARMED FORCES. Lithuanian National Defense Minister Linas Linkevicius told reporters on 20 February that members of the armed forces committed 4,296 infractions in 1994, RFE/RL's Lithuanian Service reports. There were 2,014 incidents of hazing by older soldiers. Ninety-six cases were taken to courts, 46 of which ended with convictions. Twenty-two soldiers died in 1994, of which five from beatings. Linkevicius said that discipline in the armed forces was improving and would be helped if the parliament passed a law on national defense and created a military police. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.